

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 10-13, 17-21, 23-24, and 37-50 are presently active; Claims 2-9, 14-16, 22, and 25-36 were previously cancelled without prejudice. Claims 47-50 have been added. No new matter has been added.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 10-13, 37, 39-41, and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmeister (U.S. Patent Appl. Publ. No. 2001/0036398) in view of Ogawa et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,293,746). Claims 17-21, 23-24, 43-44, and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmeister and Ogawa et al in view of Guo et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,079,354). Claim 38 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmeister and Ogawa et al in view of Toshima (U.S. Patent No. 6,007,675). Claim 42 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmeister and Ogawa et al and Guo et al in view of Toshima.

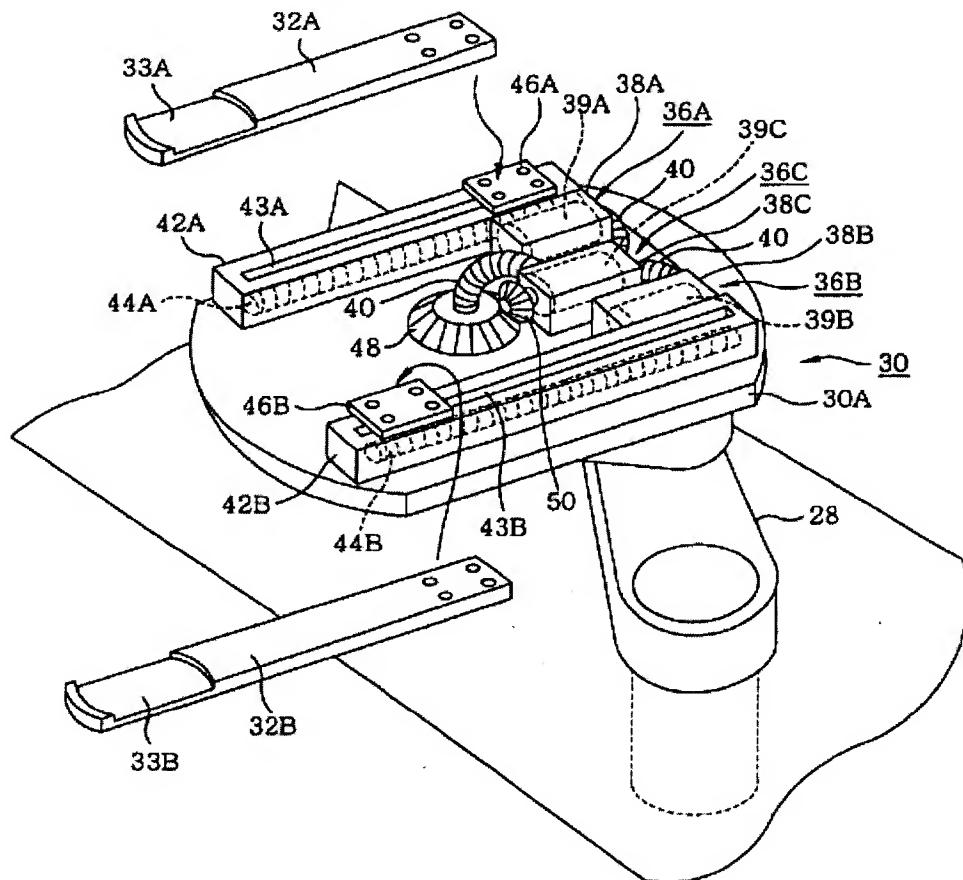
By way of review, Claim 1 is directed to a transfer mechanism for transferring substrates to be processed with respect to a processing apparatus in a semiconductor processing system. The transfer mechanism includes a transfer base, a support for supporting the transfer base, and a first and a second support arm disposed on the transfer base. The first and the second support arm respectively have a first and a second support surface for holding the substrates to be processed, and the first and the second support arm are operated such that the first and the second support surface are projected from the transfer base toward a substantially equivalent side. A first driving motor and a second driving motor respectively slide the first and the second support arm. A first guide rail and a second guide rail are

¹ The added features in Claims 1 and 17 are supported in line 2-19 of page 12 of the specification. The newly added claims 47-50 are supported in line 2-19 of page 12 and line 5-15 of page 21 of the specification.

provided on the transfer base, and a first guide slit and a second guide slit are formed on the first and the second guide rail along a length direction thereof, respectively. The first support arm and the second support arm move forward or backward along the first and the second guide slit, respectively.

Applicant's Figure 3 reproduced below illustrates one example of 1) a first guide slit 43A and a second guide slit 43B formed on the first and the second guide rail along a length direction thereof, respectively, and 2) the capability of the first support arm and the second support arm to move forward or backward along the first and the second guide slit, respectively.

FIGURE 3



Accordingly, these features permit the positioning accuracy and/or reproducibility of the positioning accuracy to be improved. Further, due to this relatively simple configuration, reliability or maintainability can also be improved (see line 6-12 of page 16 of the specification).

Hofmeister and Ogawa merely describe a frog leg type multi-joint arm capable of bending, stretching, revolving, and moving up and down. Both references fail to disclose that a first support arm and a second support arm slid forwardly or backwardly along a first guide slit and a second guide slit formed on the first guide rail and the second guide rail along a length direction thereof, with respect to the transfer base, respectively. Thus, Hofmeister and Ogawa fail to disclose or suggest the amended features.

Furthermore, since the transfer mechanisms in Hofmeister and Ogawa is directed to the operations of bending, stretching and revolving, there exist problems in positioning accuracy, reproducibility of the positioning accuracy, reliability or maintainability (see line 16 of page 2- line 16 of page 2 of Applicants' specification).

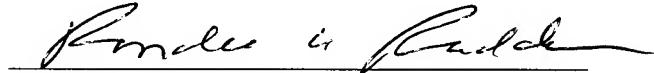
Moreover, the deficiencies of Hofmeister and Ogawa are not overcome by Guo or Toshima.

Accordingly, the prior art references including Hofmeister, Ogawa, Guo and Toshima do not show, individually or in combination, the inventive features set forth in the amended Claim 1 (or the other independent claims). Thus, when considered as a whole, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 17 (and the claims dependent therefrom) patentably define over the prior art references, and are therefore, allowable.

In view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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